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Identical letters dated 15 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and with reference to the Israeli letter issued as document S/2012/566, I should like to convey to you the response of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the allegations and slanders set out in that letter:

On 19 July 2012, after armed terrorist gangs had attacked a forward military position and the police station and telephone exchange in the village of Jubbata al-Khashab, the local police units in the area of separation headed towards the above-mentioned location in relatively large numbers in order to deal with those armed gangs. The office of the armistice delegation provided full clarification regarding that incident, in response to the queries of the command of the United Nations forces operating in the Golan.

The United Nations command was cooperative and understood that it was necessary for the local police to play their role in preserving the security of the United Nations forces, the area of separation and the area of limitation. Accordingly, there is no reason for the representative of Israel to send a letter other than to generate noise in the media and mislead public opinion with regard to the situation.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic continuously strives to maintain the stability of the area of separation and the area of limitation, and it has priorities in that regard, namely, to eradicate the armed terrorist gangs, the presence of which the representative of Israel acknowledges in his letter. Given that the armed terrorist gangs are taking refuge in the area of separation, it can be said that the aforementioned area has entered a new phase, because those groups persist in committing acts of terrorism and sabotage in the area of separation and the area of limitation. This requires the Syrian Government to take a resolute and strong position, in order to prevent those terrorist gangs from taking the initiative in the area of separation and the area of limitation. The Syrian delegation to the armistice commission remains committed to working with the United Nations forces operating in the area of separation and the area of limitation, in accordance with the agreement that obliges Syria, as the host country, to ensure the security of those forces.

Neutralizing the area of separation and the area of limitation, as well as neutralizing the terrorist groups that are active in those areas and responding to this worrisome development, necessitates that the States which sponsor the armed terrorist groups should be advised of the importance of neutralizing the area of

limitation and curtailing the activities of those groups. It is known to all that the armed groups are receiving financial, military, political and media support from outside regional and international parties. This was affirmed by the commander of the United Nations forces in a meeting with the head of the armistice commission office on 31 March 2012, as he was leaving for New York. He said that he would inform New York of the necessity of neutralizing the area of separation by instructing the States that are supporting the armed groups to issue orders to those groups that the area of separation and the area of limitation are outside their areas of operation.

The relevant Syrian authorities are cooperating fully and on an ongoing basis with the command of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) through the armistice delegation office, although the separation agreement allows local police to move freely and in unlimited numbers in that area, with a view to taking the precautionary measures required to ensure the safety of UNDOF personnel and facilities. As we noted earlier, the Syrian Government bears that responsibility.

The Force understands that the local police set out from the separation area and entered Jubbata al-Khashab, which is also in the separation area. This action was taken in coordination with and with the approval of the Force. That is why UNDOF command did not file a complaint or express any objections in that regard, other than to take exception to the uniform worn by the local police, who do not possess any counter-terrorism equipment and were forced to borrow such equipment from the counter-terrorism unit.

The concern expressed by the representative of Israel in his letter is risible. It is merely an attempt to distract attention from the real problem, namely, Israel's continued illegal presence in the Syrian Golan as an occupying Power. This situation has persisted for nearly 45 years, in violation of United Nations resolutions and all relevant provisions of international law. The parties which truly have the right to express concern are Syria, which has yet to recover its occupied territory, and UNDOF, the presence of which is meant to be temporary, that is to say, until Israel ends its occupation. The Force is not meant to have a permanent presence.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative